

Marine Debris

OFFICE OF RESPONSE AND RESTORATION • NOAA'S NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE

NOAA Marine Debris Program



Since 2005, the NOAA Marine Debris Program (MDP) has served as a centralized program within NOAA coordinating, strengthening, and enhancing marine debris activities within the agency, and among its partners and the public. The MDP has undertaken national and international efforts focused on researching, reducing, and preventing debris in the marine environment. The MDP continues to support and work closely with various partners across the U.S. to fulfill this mission.

Vision

The NOAA Marine Debris Program envisions the global ocean and its coasts, users, and inhabitants free from the impacts of marine debris.

Mission

The mission of the NOAA Marine Debris Program is to investigate and solve the problems that stem from marine debris through research, prevention, and reduction activities, in order to protect and conserve our nation's marine environment and ensure navigation safety.

MDP Staff and Locations

The Marine Debris Program is headquartered in Silver Spring, MD and has regional staff members positioned around the country to conduct and lead marine debris research, prevention, and reduction projects as well as to support regional coordination efforts, track progress of projects, review performance and efficiency measures, and conduct regional marine debris outreach to local audiences.

Marine debris is any persistent solid material that is manufactured or processed and directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally, disposed of or abandoned into the marine environment or the Great Lakes.



Derelict fishing nets (*ghostnets*), even on shore, are entanglement hazards to marine animals such as the endangered Hawaiian monk seal. Photo taken near South Point, Island of Hawaii.

Program Components and Grant Programs

The Marine Debris Research, Prevention, and Reduction Act outlines three central program components for the MDP to undertake: 1) mapping, identification, impact assessment, removal, and prevention; 2) reducing and preventing gear loss; and 3)

outreach. To address these components, the MDP has developed internal capacity within the program and the agency to conduct projects addressing these areas as well as established two competitive grant programs that provide Federal funding to non-Federal applicants nationwide.

Interagency Coordination

The passing of the Marine Debris Research, Prevention, and Reduction Act re-established the Interagency Marine Debris Coordinating Committee, which includes 10 Federal agencies (NOAA serves as chairperson) responsible for developing and recommending comprehensive and multi-disciplinary approaches to reduce the sources and impacts of marine debris to the nation's marine environment, natural resources, public safety, and economy. The Committee also ensures the coordination of Federal agency marine debris activities both nationally and internationally, as well as work with states and NGOs to support regional activities.



The MDP is a partner in "Fishing for Energy" a program that provides fishermen a no-cost disposal service for old or derelict fishing gear and converts it into energy. *Photo courtesy of T. Barry, NFWF.*



Diver assisting in the removal of derelict lobster traps (aka *casitas*) in Florida. *Photo courtesy of Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary.*

External Partnerships

The MDP appreciates the opportunities that are presented through partnerships with external organizations and entities such as the National Marine Sanctuaries Foundation, Ocean Conservancy, National Geographic, American Chemistry Council, BoatUS, AliceFerguson Foundation, among others. The MDP continues to seek new and productive partnerships to address the issue of marine debris around our Nation's coasts.

For more information visit:
www.MarineDebris.noaa.gov/
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